

the date that my State, the State of Connecticut, saw a horrible tragedy, young children who were slaughtered in an act of senseless gun violence. And today, survivors of the Newtown massacre are all across Capitol Hill urging Congress to act.

Congressman THOMPSON and Congressman KING painstakingly worked out a compromise bill to strengthen background checks in our country, balancing constitutional concerns, again, totally consistent with the Heller decision, which sets forth the individual right to gun ownership.

It is time for this Congress to act. We should pass the Thompson-King bill. We should listen to those families, the survivors of the Newtown massacre, who are begging Congress to move forward and act on this measure. It will protect the rights of gun owners, but it will also protect the public safety of this country, which is so long overdue.

I want to salute Congressman THOMPSON, Congressman KING, Congresswoman ESTY, who represents the Newtown district in Connecticut, all of my colleagues from my State, and all across the country who have come together in response to this horrible event to make sure that it will not just be a passing memory, but that we will build something from that event that will protect Americans from the epidemic of gun violence that unfortunately goes on every single day in this country.

#### HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF FRED D. WILLIAMS III

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Alabama (Ms. SEWELL) for 5 minutes.

Ms. SEWELL of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and pay tribute to the life and legacy of Mr. Fred D. Williams III, a beloved husband and father, highly respected community leader, and successful business owner from the great State of Alabama, who sadly passed away on June 11, 2013 at the age of 76. This phenomenal man was an extraordinary source of wisdom and guidance for me and so many others.

While I'm deeply saddened by his passing, I am confident that his legacy will continue through the countless people that he touched during his life.

For more than 50 years, this exceptional man owned and operated Fred's Flower and Gift Shop in the historic Selma, Alabama. Opened on October 15, 1956, Fred's Flower and Gift Shop served as a pillar in the Selma community until July 2011, when Mr. Fred Williams retired. Mr. Fred Williams, III represents a whole line of wonderful business owners in my home town of Selma, Alabama.

Fred Williams was married for 45 years to Martha J. Williams, who preceded him in death on July 15, 2003. Their marriage was blessed with two beautiful children, Kaye Frances Williams of Alexandria, Virginia, and

Kimberly Joyce Williams of Minneapolis, Minnesota. He was also the doting and loving grandfather of McKenzie and Madison Dillon.

For me, this is a personal loss since I was privileged to be raised by Fred Williams. His daughter Kim was my childhood best friend, and I grew up in the Williams household. In fact, there is not a childhood memory of mine that does not include the Williams family or my many visits to Fred's Florist.

Because of the closeness my family shared with the Williamses over the years, I affectionately called him Uncle Fred. Uncle Fred has left an indelible mark on the city of Selma, Alabama, and I am so grateful for the part he played in raising me.

While I am sad that I am not able to attend the funeral today to be with Kim and Kaye, I rejoice in knowing that Uncle Fred's legacy will live on in the many people that he touched. I find comfort in remembering his hearty laugh, the way he always walked with his head cocked to one side, and of course the way he always brought a smile to my face as he called me Terri Sue. I will forever carry with me the love, support, laughter and precious memories of Uncle Fred.

On behalf of the State of Alabama and this Nation, I ask my colleagues of the United States House of Representatives to join me in celebrating the wonderful life and legacy of Mr. Fred D. Williams III, an extraordinary American and an Alabama treasure.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak and ask unanimous consent to revise and extend my remarks.

He came by his entrepreneurship spirit honestly, following in the footsteps of his forefathers who were prominent business owners in Selma.

His floral expertise was legendary and his leadership in the industry was highly acclaimed. In 1970, Fred Williams became the first African-American member of the Alabama State Florist Association. As a trailblazer, he achieved recognition at the state level in 1979 when he served as the President of the Alabama State Florist Association and ultimately received the Association's Lifetime Membership Award for his dedicated service.

Integrally involved in his family businesses, Fred also owned and operated Fairlawn Memory Gardens and was Corporate President of J.H. Williams and Sons Funeral Home, a 108-year-old family business. He was a licensed funeral director and former member of the Alabama Funeral Directors and Morticians Association.

Fred Williams was known as a savvy business leader and a caring professional who took great pride in ensuring his floral arrangements were beautiful and personal for each occasion. He was beloved, respected and admired in our community. Many will remember him as the "dean of the floral business" who inspired and provided exceptional mentorship for other florists in the industry.

Fred Williams spent his formative years in Selma, Alabama. He moved with his family to Richmond, Virginia in the 1950s where he graduated from Maggie L. Walker High

School. He then attended the historic Stillman College in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. After graduation, he returned to his hometown of Selma and opened his flower shop in 1956.

Fred Williams was actively involved in every facet of the Selma community. His love of people and his hometown was evident in his tireless efforts to make the City of Selma a better place. The list of clubs and organizations included the Selma-Dallas County Historic Preservation Society, the Selma-Dallas Chamber of Commerce and he also served on the boards for the Vaughan-Smitherman Building and Sturdivant Hall. He was a charter member of the 12 High Club as well as the Chesterfield Club and he was a founding member of the Tuesday Night Men's Group. He was a long-time member of the Historic Brown Chapel A.M.E. Church where he earned the title of "Trustee Emeritus" for his generosity and dedicated service to the church.

#### NEWTOWN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. THOMPSON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, 6 months ago, our Nation witnessed a horrible massacre of innocence in Newtown, Connecticut. In the 6 months since, there are two important facts that we should note: first, nearly 5,000 more Americans have been killed by people using guns.

□ 1020

Second, Congress has done absolutely nothing to reduce and prevent these deaths.

The Senate took one vote to expand background checks. Sadly, it failed when a minority of Senators voted against the wishes of 90 percent of Americans. The only thing more disappointing than the Senate voting down this pro-gun owner, anti-criminal legislation is that the House has refused to vote at all.

My Republican colleague, PETER KING, and I have introduced H.R. 1565, legislation that's identical to the Senate background check effort. We have 3 Republicans, we have 179 Democrats—a total of 182 coauthors. Surely, we need more support from the Republican side of the aisle.

But the truth is this shouldn't be a controversial bill, and it shouldn't be partisan. Background checks are something everyone in both parties should be able to agree on. Everyone says they're against criminals, terrorists, and the dangerously mentally ill getting guns. But you can't be against that and be against background checks. Background checks are the first line of defense. Our bipartisan bill strengthens that first line of defense.

It's anti-criminal. Right now a criminal can buy a firearm at a gun show, over the Internet, or through a newspaper ad because those sales don't require a background check. Last year, the background check system identified and denied 88,000 gun sales to

criminals, domestic abusers, those with dangerous mental illness, and other prohibited purchasers. However, those same criminals could buy those same guns at a gun show or over the Internet without any questions asked because those sales don't require a background check.

Our bill closes this huge loophole, greatly reducing the number of places a criminal can buy a gun, because our bill would require background checks at all gun shows and for Internet or newspaper sales.

Our bill is pro-gun owner and pro-Second Amendment. It provides reasonable exceptions for firearm transfers between families and friends. You won't have to get a background check when you inherit the family rifle or borrow a shotgun for a hunting trip, or purchase a gun from a friend, hunting buddy, or neighbor.

It bans the creation of a Federal registry and makes the misuse of records a felony, punishable up to 15 years in prison. It allows Active Duty military to buy firearms in their home States or the State in which they're stationed. It authorizes the use of State concealed carry permits in lieu of a background check to purchase a firearm. And, it allows interstate handgun sales from licensed dealers.

We have a bill that's ready for the floor. It's bipartisan. It will help keep guns from criminals, terrorists, and the dangerously mentally ill, and it supports the Second Amendment rights of law-abiding Americans. If the bill didn't support the Second Amendment, my name wouldn't be on it. I'm a gun owner, and I believe that law-abiding Americans have a constitutional right to own a firearm. But I'm also a father and a grandfather, and I know that we have a responsibility to do everything we can to reduce gun violence.

This bill deserves a vote. The people of Newtown deserve a vote. The families of the nearly 5,000 people who have been killed since Newtown deserve a vote. Our kids and our grandkids deserve a vote. Mr. Speaker, please give us a vote.

#### A CHALLENGE FOR THE FRIENDS OF BRETT BAXLEY GOSNELL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. MCHENRY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MCHENRY. Mr. Speaker, in this country there are children diagnosed with rare diseases every day. While it's a tragedy that anyone is diagnosed with a disease or cancer in this country, it is a particular tragedy that the youngest in our society are diagnosed with oftentimes incurable diseases and ailments.

So today, I rise to support the Kids First Research Act, because it's important that we focus our national resources on fixing these problems, these challenges that as a society we can band together and put research dollars

where our heart is. We all do this in individual ways, whether it's donating to a local charity or focusing our interest on making sure Congress allocates resources necessary to come up with life-saving cures through the National Institutes of Health or other areas of government research.

At home, we have something called "Brett's Ride for Rhabdo." It's an incredible story of a young man at age 17 who is diagnosed with Rhabdomyosarcoma. It's a very rare pediatric cancer that roughly 300 children are diagnosed with each year. It's very rare. This incredible young man named Brett Gosnell was diagnosed at age 17 with this cancer.

Brett was an all-American kid from Hickory. Maryann and Mark Gosnell were his parents. He has two younger brothers. Just a great all-American family. I'm pleased to know the family, and I was pleased to know Brett.

Brett was an all-star kid, the kind of young man that I hope to have as my wife and I start a family. But Brett was a very special guy. He was not pleased with his SAT score—his math SAT score. He got a 740 on the math portion of the SAT. So after a round of chemotherapy he retook the SAT and he scored a perfect 800 on the math portion. Incredible young man.

So what his parents did was come together—and his family—at Brett's urging to come up with a charity bike ride that hundreds of people participate in every October in Hickory, North Carolina. Even folks like me that aren't great bike riders or particularly athletic participate in Brett's honor. Each year they are able to raise tens of thousands of dollars for Rhabdo research.

I tell the story because it's very important. Brett's story is a very important one, and inspiring to so many of us. Brett was diagnosed early and still insisted on going off to college at the University of Virginia. He did lose his fight to Rhabdo in 2006.

Brett left a letter for us that we read every October at Brett's Ride for Rhabdo. He left this letter that he dictated to a friend of his. He calls it: "A Challenge for the Friends of Brett Baxley Gosnell." He says:

I am not here physically, but I am looking down from Heaven on this assembled group. I challenge you to adopt a new goal, a new way of life for yourself. Put helping, caring about, and serving others at the center of all that you do—not just for today or tomorrow but for the remainder of your life. I ask you to look for ways in which to make a difference in the lives of others, regardless of who they are or where you find them. They are God's children and they need us. We must turn away from thinking only of ourselves and remember that each one of us has a capacity for doing something. Discover what you can do—and do it. I ask you to do that. But there is something else. In the act of helping others, think of this. It was my desire to make a difference, and I tried to do that in the opportunities that were given to me. There was so much more that I wanted to do, but I will keep my eye on you from Heaven. Now you can pick up where I left off

and serve so many others. Hear this plea and respond to it. This is your friend who asks you to accept this challenge. Do something meaningful with your life. After all, that is how you can most honor me in my life.

Brett.

I bring this to the House floor to urge my colleagues to ensure that we support important pediatric research so that we don't have to lose another Brett Gosnell.

□ 1030

#### THE SANDY HOOK PROMISE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Ms. PELOSI) for 5 minutes.

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, our hearts are broken, but our spirit is not. That is the Sandy Hook promise.

Tomorrow marks 6 months since the tragedy in Newtown, a tragedy seared in the minds of every person across America—indeed, in the minds of millions across the world. Like the anniversaries of the shootings in Tucson, Arizona, in Oak Creek, and in so many other communities, tomorrow marks an anniversary of shock, uncertainty, violence, horror. Tomorrow marks another solemn reminder of the persistent plague of gun violence in our society and of the ongoing challenge to end it.

Over the past 6 months, many words have been spoken to offer our love and support to the community of Newtown and to the students and teachers of Sandy Hook. Yet, from the start, we have known that words of comfort would never be enough, that there would be no substitute for the action that we must take that would be a truly fitting memorial to the 20 children and six teachers and administrators lost that day.

Yesterday, we had visits from the families, who brought pictures of their loved ones who were lost—Daniel Barden, Lauren Rousseau, Benjamin Wheeler, Mary Sherlach, Dylan Hockley—heartbreaking photos of these children and family members who were lost. I don't know how much more motivation we need than to see the tears in their eyes and the resolve in their voices to use their grief as a source of strength to help save other people.

That would start with a vote on bipartisan legislation by Congressman MIKE THOMPSON, Congressman PETER KING, and 180 cosponsors to expand and strengthen our background checks. No one knows better than the people of Newtown—the men and women, mothers and fathers, brothers and sisters—who lost their loved ones on December 14, 2012. Since that dark day, the families of Newtown and their supporters have turned their sorrow into strength, their pain into perseverance, their unspeakable loss into unmatched courage and determination to carry on.

Yesterday, these mothers and fathers met with both Republican and Democratic leaders. Yet they had come with